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PASS AGRICULTURE

ROME PASS SECRETARY BUTZ

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAGR, EEC

SUBJECT: SECRETARY BUTZ' MEETING WITH EC COMMISSIONERS, NOVEMBER 4, 1974

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE BUTZ AND U.S. DELEGATION MET WITH EC COMMISSIONER FOR AGRICULTURE LARDINOIS AND OTHER COMMISSION OFFICIALS NOVEMBER 4, 1974 AND DISCUSSED INTER ALIA

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CURRENT COMMUNITY FEED GRAIN REQUIREMENTS, PROSPECTS FOR FOOD

RESERVES AND COMMODITY AGREEMENTS, AND U.S. COUNTERVAILING DUTIES ON EC DAIRY IMPORTS. THE COMMISSION AGREED TO IMPROVE ITS MONITORING SYSTEM ON GRAIN IMPORTS AND CONTINUES TO EXPECT THAT THE EC WILL IMPORT ONLY AROUND 7 - 7.5 MILLION METRIC TONS OF U.S. CORN THIS YEAR. THE COMMISSION ALSO AGREED TO MEET WITH US EXPERTS TO DISCUSS THE DAIRY PROBLEM. END SUMMARY.

2. SECRETARY BUTZ DISCUSSED WITH EC COMMISSIONER LARDINOIS AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION'S DIRECTORATE GENERAL FOR AGRICULTURE THE CURRENT FEED GRAIN SITUATION, FOOD RESERVES, COMMODITY AGREEMENTS, AND EXPORT SUBSIDIES ON DAIRY, PORK AND POULTRY PRODUCTS. MEMBERS OF THE U.S.S. DELEGATION WERE: DEPUTY ASSIST SECRETARY RICHARD BELL, FAS ADMINISTRATOR DAVID HUME, STATE DEPT. OFP DIRECTOR JAMES PLACKE, AMBASSADOR JOSEPH GREENWALD AND USEC MISSION OFFICERS. EC COMMISSION OFFICIALS INCLUDED DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR AGRICULTURE LOUIS RABOT, AND LARDINOIS' CHEF DE CABINET HANS WIJNMAALEN. SECRETARY BUTZ AND U.S. DELEGATION ALSO MET SEPARATELY ON NOVEMBER 4 WITH EC COMMISSION PRESIDENT ORTLI AND COMMISSIONERS AOEMS, CHEYSSON, GUNDELACH AND LARDINOIS. A BRIEF RUN-DOWN OF THE EARLIER BUTZ-LARDINOIS DISCUSSIONS ON FEED GRAINS WAS GIVEN AND COMMISSIONER SOAMES RAISED THE ISSUE OF U.S. COUNTERVAILING DUTIES AND EC DAIRY IMPORT SUBSIDIES. FOLLOWING IS A COMBINED ACCOUNT OF BOTH MEETINGS.

3. GRAIN SITUATION. BUTZ DESCRIBED THE CURRENT TIGHT SUPPLY SITUATION FOR U.S. FEED GRAINS WHICH HAS BEEN EXACERBATED BY A SIMILAR TIGHT SUPPLY SITUATION FOR CANADIAN GRAINS. HE EMPHASIZED THAT THE U.S. LIVESTOCK INDUSTRY HAS SO FAR BORNE THE BRUNT OF ADJUSTING TO THE SMALLER SUPPLIES AND THE NEED FOR LOWER UTILIZATION OF FEED GRAINS. THIS BURDEN, HE SAID, MUST BE MORE EQUALLY SHARED AMONG NATIONS. BELL CITED A RECENT USDA-SPONSORED SURVEY WHICH CONCLUDED THAT GRAIN USED FOR FEED IN THE COMMUNITY WILL NOT DECREASE MUCH IN 1974/75. ALSO, REPORTS FROM US EMBASSIES INDICATE THAT PORK PRODUCTION WILL INCREASE IN GERMANY AND THE BENELUX COUNTRIES NEXT YEAR.

4. BUTZ AND BELL PRESSED LARDINOIS TO TAKE FURTHER MEASURES TO CUT USE OF GRAINS FOR FEED IN THE COMMUNITY. REFERRING TO LARDINOIS' VISIT TO WASHINGTON LAST AUGUST, BUTZ SAID AT THAT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TIME LARDINOIS ESTIMATED THAT THE COMMUNITY WOULD LOWER ITS IMPORTS OF US CORN TO ABOUT 7 TO 7.5 MILLION METRIC TONS IN 1974/75. HOWEVER, EXPORT SALES COMMITMENTS REGISTERED WITH USDA SHOW SALES TO THE EC OF 13.6 MILLION METRIC TONS OF CORN. BUTZ SAID THIS FIGURE OBVIOUSLY COULD CONTAIN SOME "WATER" AS EXPORTERS HEDGE AGAINST THE POSSIBILITY OF EXPORT CONTROLS, BUT THAT USDA HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO DETERMINE THE EXTENT OF THESE EXCESS SALES. BUTZ STATED THAT THE US SIMPLY COULD NOT LIVE WITH THIS VOLUME

OF EXPORTS TO THE COMMUNITY. FIRM ESTIMATES, HE SAID, ARE NEEDED ON WHAT EC IMPORT REQUIREMENTS WILL BE.

5. LARDINOIS STATED THAT HE STANDS BY HIS ESTIMATE OF EC CORN IMPORTS FROM THE US OF 7.5 MILLION METRIC TONS DESPITE BAD WEATHER IN FRANCE WHICH HAS HURT THE FRENCH CROP. THE EXPORT COMMITMENT FIGURE OF 13.6 MILLION METRIC TONS IS, IN HIS OPINION, NOT AN ACCURATE REFLECTION OF ACTUAL IMPORTS. EC GRAIN POLICY, THIS YEAR, HE SAID, IS GEARED TO A REDUCTION OF IMPORTS OF US FEED GRAINS. HE SAID THE COMMUNITY DOES NOT HAVE A STATE-TRADING SYSTEM AND THUS CANNOT CONTROL ABSOLUTELY THE VOLUME OF IMPORTS; BUT IT CAN TAKE, AND HAS TAKEN, STEPS TO INFLUENCE FEED GRAIN IMPORTS, SUCH AS (A) APPLICATION OF PROHIBITIVELY HIGH EXPORT LEVIES ON GRAINS; (B) AN ATTEMPT TO MAINTAIN A LARGE PRICE DIFFERENCE WITHIN THE EC BETWEEN CORN AND WHEAT; (C) ENCOURAGEMENT OF LOW SLAUGHTER WEIGHTS FOR PIGS AND (D) THE REDUCTION OR ABOLITION OF EXPORT SUBSIDIES FOR PORK, POULTRY, AND EGGS. LARDINOIS SAID THESE MEASURES ARE DIRECTED EITHER AT SHRINKING THE USE OF FEED GRAINS IN THE COMMUNITY OR OF REPLACING WHEAT FOR CORN. HE SAID THAT TOTAL FEED USAGE IN THE COMMUNITY WILL DECLINE IN 1975 AND THAT IT IS ERRONEOUS, TO LOOK AT ONLY THE USE OF FEED GRAINS. ONE MUST TAKE INTO ACCOUNT ALL FEEDS. HE MENTIONED THAT THE US, FOR EXAMPLE, WAS NO LONGER AN EXPORTER OF FEED GRAIN SUBSTITUTES BECAUSE OF INCREASED DOMESTIC CONSUMPTION AND THAT IT WAS EVEN IMPORTING MILLING BY-PRODUCTS FROM OTHER COUNTRIES.

6. LARDINOIS ADMITTED THAT PORK PRODUCTION IS INCREASING IN GERMANY AND THE BENELUX, BUT, ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN, HE MENTIONED THE DIFFICULT STRAITS CATTLE PRODUCERS IN THE UK AND IRELAND ARE IN AT PRESENT. IN THESE COUNTRIES, HE SAID, FEED GRAIN COSTS ARE AT WORLD LEVELS AND THE THREAT OF CATTLE STARVATION IS VERY REAL.

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7. FOLLOWING THESE COMMENTS, LARDINOIS STATED THAT HE INTENDS TO CONTINUE TO FULLY COLLABORATE WITH THE US IN REDUCING PRESSURES ON US FEED SUPPLIES. HE SAID HE WOULD TAKE STEPS TO IMPROVE THE STATISTICAL INFORMATION RECEIVED BY THE COMMISSION FROM THE MEMBER STATES PARTICULARLY, IF POSSIBLE, TO IDENTIFY SHIPMENTS INTO ROTTERDAM THAT ARE DESINTED FOR NON-EC COUNTRIES AND TO HELP FIRM UP EC ESTIMATES OF IMPORT REQUIREMENTS. LARDINOIS STATED HE WOULD SEE THAT THIS STATISTICAL INFORMATION WOULD BE MADE MORE AVAILABLE TO THE U.S. LARDINOIS ALSO SAID HE WOULD PROPOSE CERTAIN CHANGES IN THE COMMUNITY'S GRAIN IMPORT LICENSING SYSTEM TO EFFECT SOMEWHAT GREATER CONTROL OF EC FEED GRAIN IMPORTS. IN THIS CONNECTION, HE MENTIONED THE POSSIBILITY OF CENTRALIZING CONTROL IN THE COMMISSION OVER ISSUANCE OF IMPORT LICENSES AND OF REQUIRING IMPORTERS TO DEPOSIT A

SURETY TO OBTAIN AN IMPORT LICENSE. (COMMENT: A SMALL SURETY DEPOSIT IS ALREADY REQUIRED FOR GRAIN IMPORT LICENSES -- SEE EC A-187).

8. BUTZ EXPRESSED HIS APPRECIATION FOR LARDINOIS' COOPERATION WHICH, HE SAID, WOULD PROVE IMMENSELY HELPFUL IN BLUNTING THE PRESSURES FOR COMPULSORY EXPORT CONTROLS IN THE US.

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PASS AGRICULTURE

ROME PASS SECRETARY BUTZ

9. GRAIN RESERVES. LARDINOIS AND RABOT EXPLAINED THE EC POSITION

ON GRAIN RESERVES IN THE CONTEXT OF THE WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE. THEY SAID THAT THE COMMUNITY WAS PREPARED IN PRINCIPLE TO GO ALONG WITH THE U.S. GRAIN RESERVE PROPOSAL BUT THAT THE MECHANICS OF A STOCKING POLICY SHOULD BE WORKED OUT IN THE MTN (IN THE FRAMEWORK OF COMMODITY AGREEMENTS) AND NOT IN THE WFC.

10. RABOT STATED THAT THE EC CONCEPTION OF STOCKPILING AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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COMMODITY AGREEMENTS HAS CHANGED IN THE LAST YEAR. THE OLD EC IDEA WAS TO PURSUE AGREEMENTS UNDER WHICH TRADE WOULD BE CARRIED OUT WITHIN NARROWLY PRESCRIBED MINIMUM AND MAXIMUM PRICE LEVELS. UNDER THE NEW EC CONCEPTION THE EMPHASIS WOULD BE ON THE LEVEL OF STOCKS WITH PRICE LEVELS A SECONDARY MOTIVATION. PRICES WOULD NOT BE FIXED IN ADVANCE EXCEPT WITHIN VERY BROAD LIMITS. RABOT SAID THAT THE MINIMUM PRICE LEVEL WOULD BE SET SO LOW THAT MARKET PRICES WOULD RARELY APPROACH IT. HE EXPLAINED THAT WHEN PRICES FOR WHEAT ARE TRENDING DOWNWARD AND APPROACHING A CERTAIN TRIGGER LEVEL, CONSULTATION ON LOOKING TOWARD CONCERTED ACTION BY PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES WOULD BE CALLED FOR.

11. BUTZ REPLIED THAT IT NOW APPEARS AS IF U.S. AND EC CONCEPTIONS OF A GRAIN RESERVE PROGRAM ARE NOT VERY FAR APART. THE U.S. EMPHASIS ALSO IS ON QUANTITY AND NOT PRICE, WITH STOCKS TO BE HELD BY THE TRADE AND NOT THE GOVERNMENTS. THE KEY DIFFERENCE AT THIS POINT BETWEEN THE U.S. AND EC POSITIONS IS UNDER WHICH BODY NEGOTIATIONS ON STOCKS SHOULD BE CARRIED OUT. THE U.S. PREFERS THAT DISCUSSIONS BEGIN WITH THE WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE. THE EC IS AMENABLE TO AN AGREEMENT IN THE WFC ON THE PRINCIPLES OF A RESERVE POLICY BUT WANTS NEGOTIATIONS ON THE STRUCTURE AND DETAILS OF STOCKPILING TO BE DONE IN THE MTN.

12. BUTZ ASKED LARDINOIS WHETHER HIS CONCEPT OF COMMODITY AGREEMENTS WOULD NOT INJECT DOMESTIC AGRICULTURAL POLICY INTO THE MTN. LARDINOIS REPLIED, "NOT TOO MUCH". HE SAID EACH COUNTRY WOULD STILL BE FREE TO PURSUE ITS OWN INTERNAL DOMESTIC POLICY. WHAT THE COMMUNITY IS AFTER IS MORE ORDERLY MARKETING IN INTERNATIONAL TRADE.

13. DAIRY AND COUNTERVAILING DUTIES. BUTZ EXPLAINED THE BACKGROUND OF THE PRESIDENT'S RECENT STATEMENT ON THE IMPOSITION OF COUNTERVAILING DUTIES ON IMPORTS OF SUBSIDIZED DAIRY PRODUCTS. HE SAID THAT IF THE COMMUNITY REINSTITUTES ITS SUBSIDIES ON CHEESE EXPORTS TO THE U.S., THE U.S. WOULD HAVE TO IMPOSE COUNTERVAILING DUTIES. HE SAID THAT SUCH ACTION WOULD BE CONSISTENT WITH THE U.S. POSITION OF FREE TRADE ON A COMMERCIALY UNSUBSIDIZED BASIS. THE U.S. DAIRY INDUSTRY, HE SAID, HAS COME A LONG WAY IN LIBERALIZING ITS ATTITUDE ON IMPORT QUOTAS, BUT IT CANNOT ACCEPT THE IDEA OF SUBSIDIZED IMPORTS.

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14. WIJNMAALEN, LARDINOIS' CHEF DE CABINET, SAID THAT THE COMMUNITY COULD CONTINUE ITS SUSPENSION OF SUBSIDIES FOR ANOTHER MONTH OR TWO BUT AFTER THAT SOMETHING WOULD HAVE TO BE DONE. LARDINOIS SAID THESE SUBSIDIES ARE INTENDED TO "BRIDGE THE GAP" BETWEEN THE U.S. AND EC SUPPORT SYSTEMS FOR MILK PRODUCTS AND ARE NOT INTENDED TO DUMP COMMUNITY CHEESES ON THE U.S. MARKET. COMMUNITY AND U.S. FARMERS, HE SAID, RECEIVE ABOUT THE SAME PRICES FOR THEIR MILK. HOWEVER, HE MAINTAINS THAT U.S. CHEESE BENEFITS FROM A HIDDEN SUBSIDY THROUGH THE PRICE SET FOR FLUID MILK UNDER THE MILK MARKETING ORDERS. BUTZ REFUTED THIS ARGUMENT, REPLYING THAT THE MILK MARKETING ORDERS APPLY ONLY IN METROPOLITAN AREAS AND NOT IN THE PRINCIPAL CHEESE-PRODUCING REGIONS WHERE THE PRICES OF MANUFACTURING MILK AND MILK FOR DIRECT CONSUMPTION ARE THE SAME.

15. SOAMES REFERRED TO AN UNDERSTANDING HE THOUGHT HE HAD WITH THE U.S. THAT THE EC SUSPENSION OF SUBSIDIES ON CHEESE EXPORTS TO THE U.S. WOULD BE USED TO GAIN TIME UNTIL THE TRADE BILL WAS PASSED WITH A FLEXIBLE TIME PROVISION RELATING TO THE COUNTERVAILING DUTY LAW. HE PLEADED FOR FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL SCENARIO; THE COMMISSIONNERS, HE SAID, HAD REALLY PUT THEIR HEADS ON THE BLOCK IN SUSPENDING THE SUBSIDIES IN ANTICIPATION OF MTN NEGOTIATIONS ON COUNTERVAILING DUTIES.

16. SOAMES AND GUNDELACH ARGUED THAT THE US WAS IN VIOLATION OF THE GATT (EXCEPT FOR THE PROTOCOL OF PROVISIONAL APPLICATION) REQUIREMENT FOR A FINDING OF INJURY BEFORE APPLYING COUNTERVAILING DUTIES. SOAMES ADDED THAT ACCORDING TO HIS INFORMATION, U.S. IMPORTS OF EC CHEESE ACCOUNT FOR ONLY FOUR PERCENT OF U.S. CHEESE CONSUMPTION. HE CONCLUDED THAT IT CAN HARDLY BE ARGUED THAT THE EC SUBSIDIES HURT U.S. PRODUCERS, PARTICULARLY WHILE WE HAVE SUCH LIMITED IMPORT QUOTAS.

17. THE SENATE VERSION OF THE TRADE BILL, SOAMES SAID, SEEMS TO PRECLUDE NEGOTIATIONS ON COUNTERVAILING DUTIES AND HAS PUT THE U.S. AND EC ON A COLLISION COURSE. HE AND LARDINOIS BOTH SAID THAT IF ALL PARTIES ARE INFLEXIBLE ON THEOLOGY, CONFRONTATION IS INEVITABLE. SOAMES ENDED BY ASKING, "WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?"

18. BELL RESPONDED THAT HE HAD NO HARD AND FAST SOLUTION TO THE PRESENT IMPASSE. HE SUGGESTED, AND DREW GENERAL AGREEMENT

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FROM THE EC SIDE, THAT US AND COMMUNITY DAIRY EXPERTS SHOULD

SIT DOWN TOGETHER, POSSIBLY IN A FEW WEEKS, TO TRY TO FIND SOME SOLUTION.

19. POULTRY. BELL AND HUME REVIEWED THE COMMISSION ACTIONS TAKEN IN RECENT MONTHS WHICH GREATLY INCREASED THE LEVIES, PARTICULARLY ON TURKEY PARTS IMPORTED FROM THE U.S. HUME COMMENTED THAT THESE ACTIONS HAD GIVEN A LOT OF AMMUNITION TO U.S. POULTRY PRODUCERS SEEKING EXPORT CONTROLS ON GRAINS. THE ARGUMENT OF THESE PRODUCERS IS THAT THE EC WANTS CONTINUED ACCESS TO U.S. GRAIN SUPPLIES, BUT, AT THE SAME TIME, EFFECTIVELY RESTRICTS IMPORTS OF US TURKEY PARTS. IN RETALIATION, THE U.S. SHOULD IMPOSE GRAIN EXPORT CONTROLS. HUME ASKED LARDINOIS TO RE-STUDY THE QUESTION OF LEVIES ON U.S. POULTRY PARTS AND TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THE HIGH LEVEL OF PROTECTION. RABOT REPLIED THAT THE U.S. HAD A GOOD POINT AND INDICATED THAT HE WOULD LOOK INTO THE MATTER.

20. BEEF. BUTZ CITED THE HEAVY BUILD-UP OF CATTLE ON PASTURE IN AUSTRALIA WHICH WILL PROBABLY MEAN A SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE IN AUSTRALIAN BEEF PRODUCTION IN 1975. WITH THE EC AND JAPANESE MARKETS CLOSED TO IMPORTS, THE AUSTRALIAN BEEF WOULD TEND TO MOVE TO THE US. HE SAID IF US IMPORTS ESCALATE SUBSTANTIALLY, BEEF IMPORT CONTROLS WILL HAVE TO BE ACTIVATED. LARDINOIS SUGGESTED THAT AUSTRALIA SELL MORE BEEF TO THE USSR AND EASTERN EUROPE; HE MADE NO MENTION OF ANY POSSIBLE RELAXATION OF THE EC IMPORT BAN.

21. COMMENT: THE MEETINGS TOOK PLACE IN THE FRANK, OPEN AND CONSTRUCTIVE ATMOSPHERE THAT HAS CHARACTERIZED PREVIOUS BUTZ/LARDINOIS MEETINGS; AND IT WAS APPARENT THAT LARDINOIS CONSIDERS IT IMPORTANT TO PRESERVE THE PERSONAL NATURE OF HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH BUTZ THAT CONTRIBUTES TO THIS ATMOSPHERE. THE MEETING WITH PRESIDENT ORTOLI AND OTHER COMMISSIONERS WAS EQUALLY FRANK AND CONSTRUCTIVE. LARDINOIS RESPONDED POSITIVELY TO OUR NEEDS FOR MORE PRECISE AND RELIABLE ESTIMATES OF EC GRAIN IMPORT REQUIREMENTS AND DATA. WE INTEND TO FOLLOW-UP HIS RESPONSES TO OUR REQUESTS WITH APPROPRIATE COMMISSION OFFICIALS. WE RECOMMEND A PROMPT FOLLOW-UP ON BELL'S SUGGESTION TO SEND A TEAM TO BRUSSELS TO DISCUSS THE DAIRY PROBLEM. GREENWALD

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